

GOOD NEWS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF MELCHIZEDEK (WASSA ATOBIASE BRANCH)

**A TERM PAPER
IN FULFILLMENT OF HS 303
CHURCH HISTORY**

**PRESENTED TO
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OYIBI-GHANA

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CONTENTS

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ----- i

INTRODUCTION ----- 2

CHAPTER ONE ----- 3 - 6

The Life History of the Founder

- I) His birth
- II) His education
- III) His religious background
- IV) His call to the ministry
- V) His marriage
- VI) His vision

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CHAPTER TWO ----- 7 - 9

The History of the Church

- I) Where it started and when it was established
- II) How was it established
- III) The members he started with

CHAPTER THREE ----- 10 - 17

A. Practices of the Church

- I) Child naming
- II) Child blessing
- III) Adult baptism
- IV) Administering of the Lord's Supper

V) Burial and memorial thanksgiving service

VI) Fasting and prayer

VII) Wearing of white clothe

B. Ministers in the church

I) Preaching and teaching

II) Caring and counselling

CHAPTER FOUR ----- 18 - 21

The Worship Life of the Church

I) Worshipping days and times

II) Mode of worship

CHAPTER FIVE ----- 22 - 27

The Doctrines of the church

I) Godhead

II) Jesus Christ

III) Holy Spirit

IV) Man and the fall

V) Salvation

VI) Bible

VII) Life after death and judgment

VIII) Marriage and divorce

CHAPTER SIX ----- 28 - 29

The Growth of the Church

Evangelism

CHAPTER SEVEN ----- 30 - 31

Church Finance

CHAPTER EIGHT ----- 32 - 33

Evaluation

CHAPTER NINE

Church Constitution ----- Not available – It is being revised

CONCLUSION ----- 34

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INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement in the study of the A.I.C Churches of Ghana, for every final year student to write a brief history of one of the AIC churches of his choice. As a result of this, I have chosen to write a brief history of the Church of Melchizedek (Atobiase branch).

The motive is that, this church is one of the African Independent churches in Ghana. It is also a church that, I attend since my infancy up to today. I have much to say about it.

In writing of this paper, I have first contacted my pastor in the church, the secretary and the elders to assist me to write. Therefore, my primary source will be oral accounts gathered through interviewing my pastor, his secretary and elders. My secondary has been the constitution of the church. Thirdly, another source has been from me the writer because it is my church and I know some things concerning it especially the Atobiase branch (Western Region of Ghana)

PURPOSE OF WRITING

The purpose of writing this paper (Church History) is that, it will help the seminary to know more about the background, doctrine and practices of the church of Melchizedek. Once again, it will assist the congregation of the church to know much about the church.

when they have a copy of the history in their church office or in their files. Lastly, it will also help the students writing this paper to know more about the church of Melchizedek.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH OF MELCHIZEDEK

I. His Birth:

The founder of the church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase is pastor Edward Ayetey Affum. He was born to Opanyin Samuel Affum and Maame Mary Apomia families at Larteh on April 12th, 1938 in the eastern region of Ghana.

The father was a monogamist which implied that, he was married to Mary Apomia alone till his death. His father's occupation was farming. The mother was a trader.

II. His Education:

Unfortunately Pastor Edward Kwame Ayetey had attended primary school up to class three in Akyim Odaa (Esoboa). He stopped at class three because his father had died early when he was young and no one was paying his school fees for him. His father died when he was eight years old. This implied that, Pastor Edward had little formal educational background from his infancy up to today.

After his father had died, his sister called Agnes Esi, took him in 1946 to stay with her at Akyim Odaa, to help her in selling cloths. He stayed with her sister for sometime and he left her for farming work at Wassa Atobiase.

III. His Religious Background:

When Pastor Kwame Ayetey was born, his parents were Christians. They worshipped with Presbyterian Church at Larteh. He also started going to that church during his early life at Larteh.

When his father died, his sister took him to stay with her at Akyim Odaa. He stayed with her sister but when her sister saw that, he was grown, she told him that, she had bought a piece of land at Wassa Atobiase, he should therefore go and farm the land to plant cocoa. When he got there he joined Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C) at Atwebesa town.

When he was in the church for sometime, it was realized that he had got the gift of healing and prophecy and also he knew how to take care of pregnant women up to the time of delivery.

When he got such gift in Christ, the congregation in the church of C.A.C had elected him to be the pastor of the church. He was the pastor for five years. By then, he knew how to read the vernacular (Twi) Bible very well. He used to preach and teach with this type of Bible from his infancy to today. During that time the church grew and were having about six to seven hundred congregation. With this, the church had expanded and they had opened a new branch at Ologo, which was somehow far from the former one.

IV. His Call to the Melchizedek Church:

In 1978 when pastor Edward was in the Church of C.A.C Atwebesa, he fell sick and could not talk, walk or do anything at all. His family took him to Cape Coast at "Odiifo Joinson" (sikafo Amantem). The Odiifo here means a prophet who had the gift of healing. According to pastor Edward Ayetey, he recovered through the prayers of this Odiifo at Cape Coast. He said that, after he had been healed one of the pastors from Melchizedek church called Opoku came and told him that, the sickness he had was from the church (C.A.C). With this, Pastor Edward decided to leave the church of Christ Apostolic and joined another church.

So in 1979 he left the church and joined the Melchizedek church. He decided to open a branch at Atobiase. So he started with prayers and fasting during the early days of the church. In short this was how Pastor Edward Ayetey has been called to the church of Melchizedek and started a branch at Atobiase.

His Vision

Everybody has his or her goal or reason for doing a particular thing. No one would do something without a purpose. The same thing happened from the beginning up to today that all pastors have their vision of opening a church.

According to Pastor Edward Ayetey Affum, when he was into the ministry, he was a person who had not played with the work of God. He said that his main

vision of opening the church of Melchizedek was to let the Gospel reach all places. He said that, his concern was to preach the word of God. So that those who were in the dark would come out from the darkness to the light of God. That was, people who had not known Jesus Christ would come and accept Christ as their personal saviour and serve Him as Lord.

Once again, Pastor Edward said that, as he was having the gift of healing, he wanted to be helping those who were sick to get well and also helping people having problems to be free. For instance he wanted to be taking care of the pregnant women up to their time of delivery.

VI. His Marriage:

Pastor Kwame Ayetey Affum was married to a woman called Dora Adjo Agor who came from Ogomy Okped (Somanya) in the Eastern Region part of Ghana. He married in the year 1965 when he had opened the church of Melchizedek, he was having a wife already. He had married before being ordained to become a pastor. He and his wife gave birth to six children but unfortunately one died in childhood and now remained five. They all attended school.

His wife was a woman who had the zeal and time for God's work. This has helped pastor. his ministry goes on very well.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

I. WHERE IT STARTED AND WHEN IT WAS ESTABLISHED:

The Church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase was first established by Pastor Edward Ayetey at a village called "Pinase" in Western Region of Ghana. This took place on 3rd September 1979. The reason was that, "Pinase" was a place where Pastor Edward stayed. He saw that, there were villages around him. So he decided to open a church at that place so that he could win the people over there to Christ.

Pastor Edward started the church at Pinase from 1979 to 1986 and when he saw that, from where some people used to come to church was too far, he decided to move the church from his house to Atobiase town. so that the journey would be shorted for those people. That was because the majority of the people used to come from that area. On 24th November, 1986 the church of Melchizedek was transferred from Pinase to Atobiase town.

The church stayed in Atobiase for about five years and was transferred again to Kofi Egyankaba (a village of Wassa Atobiase). The church found out later that, some of its chairs got missing. They did announce the loss for several times and it continued going on. With this, the congregation decided to send the church from Atobiase to Egyankaba village.

Before the church was sent to Egyankaba village, the pastor and his prayer groups went there for prayers. The reason for this prayer was that the church wanted to pray and ask God for guidance in order to establish the church over there. Also, the church wanted to pray seriously in order to destroy the devil's work that would stand against the church. So on 5th January, 1991 the church was transferred from Atobiase to Kofi Egyankaba village where the church is now staying.

II. How was it Established:

In all things, there are ways or procedures to make such things. In the same way before the church of Melchizedek was established by Pastor Edward Ayetey, the church passed through procedures. The way was through fasting and prayers. Pastor Edward told me that, when he came to Christ for some time, he was gifted by the Lord Jesus Christ. That was how he was gifted with the spirit of prophecy and healing. Due to that, he said he did not played with his fasting and prayers at all. He said that, he prayed all the time for the sick people, pregnant women and those who were having problems. Because of this, a lot of people used to come for prayers. And it was witnessed that, Pastor Edward Ayetey had healed many people through this type of prayers and fasting. Even I saw a lot of people healed through the Holy Spirit. So due to the prayers of this pastor, he got a lot of people, he decided to open a church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase area. This was how he opened or established the church of Melchizedek.

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III The Members he started the church with:

When Pastor Edward started the church first at "Pinase", the people he started with were seven in number. These people were Jacob Tetteh, Kofi Mbriku, Patrick Olando Dawutey, William Agor, Agness Adjoa Tordjo, Mary Maaku and Juliana dede.

Unfortunately, all these people were not educated except Patrick Olando Dawutey and William. They helped the pastor when he established the church in record keeping. The rest too sacrificed themselves to the work of God, and they had assisted this pastor in such a way that the church developed and multiplied into a large congregation.

CHAPTER THREE

A. PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH

I. Child Naming:

According to Pastor Edward Ayetey and Bishop Isaac Wontumi, a new born baby is named on the eighth day after birth. The reason is that, they said, in Luke Chapter 2:21 when Jesus Christ was born, he was circumcised on the eighth day. He was sent to the temple and was named on that day.

1. How the church performed the naming of a new born baby:

When the time comes to name a child or perform an out-dooring ceremony, the whole congregation, including the pastor, goes to the house where the child was born.

In the first place, the child will be presented on the bed or the mother will take him on her lap. Then the pastor reads Psalms 128 and then prays for the child. Secondly, two glasses of water and a plate of honey are placed on a table. The first water in the glass is an ordinary water and the water in the other glass is holy water. It is called holy because that water has been blessed with prayer by the pastor.

Thirdly, the pastor will dip one of his fingers in the water and drop a little of it into the child's mouth. This is usually done three times. As the pastor is doing

this he will be reciting this “as water quenches any fire, this water which is given to you (the child) should quench any trouble that will come into your life.

Fourthly, the pastor will also deep his fingers in the holy water and say this “this holy water acts as medicine and salt in the child’s life”. Again, the pastor will deep one of his fingers into the honey three times and will say to the child that “as honey is a sweet food in the world, so the child’s life must be “sweet” as the “honey”. The motive is that, all these things should assist the child so that, when he or she grows, he or she will live in peace and whatever speech he or she gives must be peaceful.

After doing all these things, the congregation will pray together for the child. The pastor will then take the child and pray for the child and bless him or her. The pastor will again donate money for the child to signify that, poverty will never come to the child’s life. Lastly, all people who are gathered there will present their gifts for the child through the parent.

II Child Blessing:

According to Bishop Isaac Wontumi and Pastor Edward Ayetey, the church of Melchizedek does not baptize a child, but the church blesses a child when he or she is three months (90 days) after birth. The mother brings the child to the church for the blessing.

After the child is blessed, the church will wait when the child is eighteen (18) years before he or she is baptize. It is at that age which the church thinks the person can confess his or her sins to God for forgiveness because he or she knows what is good and bad. After the child has been blessed, he or she is given blessing certificate and that certificate acts as birth certificate for the child. He or she can present it anywhere people ask for that certificate.

How Child blessing is done:

According to Pastor Edward Ayetey, the parents present the child to the church when he or she is three months old and the whole congregation pray for the child. After that, the pastor raises the child up and bless him or her. When this is being done, the pastor will now issue the blessing certificate for the child. After doing all these things, the whole congregation will now donate gifts to the child.

III Adult Baptism:

According to the pastor, the church baptizes people at the age of 18 by immersion. The motive is that, it is the time people are mature to confess their sins to God and profess their faith. But before anyone will be baptized, the church will run pre-baptism classes before they are baptized. That is, the church will teach them the word of God for three months in order to let them understand the purpose of being a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ.

According to the pastor and Bishop Isaac Wontumi, baptism symbolizes the previous entrance of the believer into the communion of Christ's death and resurrection. In other words, it signifies regeneration with Christ Jesus. They also said that, the church believes that baptism in the name of the Godhead (God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) in accordance with the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. It also means that, just as Christ was resurrected from the death, we will also resurrect with Him at the last day. Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:47, Galatians 3:27, Roman 6:46, Col. 2:12 and 1 Peter 3:20-21.

The church believes that, being born again is being saved and given a clear testimony of sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, in the church of Melchizedek, it is only ordained ministers who have the right to baptize someone.

IV. Administering of the Lord's Supper:

According to Pastor Edward and Bishop Isaac Wontumi of the church of Melchizedek, the Lord's Supper is one of the practices that the church observes. They said that, this communion was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ to be practiced in the church in remembrance of Him until His return. The church believes that, the elements, that is the bread and the wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. Matthew 26:26-30, I Corinthians 1:23-31. The reason is that, the church believes Christ's body was broken when he was beaten and crucified. He

carried our sins and sickness to the cross that we might be forgiven and healed. This means that, the shed blood established a new covenant 1 Peter 3:21-22, I Corinthians 11:25.

The church of Melchizedek believes that partaking in the Lord's Supper serves the prize of its constant dependence on the one crucified, now a risen saviour and as a source of our spiritual life. Once again, the church believes that partaking in the Lord's Supper symbolizes the continuous dependence of the believer in Christ.

The mode of administering the Lord's Supper:

The way the Lord's Supper is done in the church of Melchizedek is by using bread and wine. The church believes that, the bread only symbolizes Christ's body and the drink symbolizes His blood shed for the remission of our sins. Also the church believes that, the bread is broken to sustain our physical life and to nourish our spiritual life. I Corinthians 11:29.

Those who offer the Lord's Supper:

According to Bishop Isaac Wontumi and Pastor Edward, the Lord's Supper is administered by ordained ministers or any authorized elder or member in the church. They said that, deacons and deaconesses are not allowed to give communion in the church. The reason is that, the church believes that, it is only ordained pastors who give communion.

There is now a law in the church which bound the members not to take communion. Only thing is to baptize. The Lord's Supper is observed every first Sunday of the month.

V Burial and memorial thanksgiving service:

When some one dies, the first thing is for the church to go where the deceased is lay up for wake-keeping up to the next day scheduled for burial service. It is the responsibility of the pastor to deliver the sermon on that day at the place where the corpse is laid. After that the pastor prays over the corpse and it is taken to the cemetery for burial. After that the church waits for forty (40) days before performing a thanksgiving service. The reason is that, the spirit of every person who dies leaves him or her in the fortieth day. Because the church believes that the Christ that we are following also left the world when it was the fortieth day after He dies.

VI. Fasting and Prayers:

Fasting and prayers are very necessary to the church of Melchizedek. In the church, there are two main seasons for fasting and prayers. The first one is NATIONAL RETREAT (TABORA FASTING) and the second one is LENT (EASTER FASTING).

The national retreat or tabora festival takes place from the first week of the month of August to the second week. This fasting and prayers take two weeks or thirteen days. Every member is advised to involve him or herself in the fasting, except the young ones and pregnant women. During the breaking of the fasting, all the congregation comes together to pray. This fasting and prayers takes places once in a year. With this, I asked the pastor and Bishop Isaac Wontumi, the reason why we do this and they said it was the festival of the church to observe it every year.

The other fasting which is the lent fasting takes place from the Ash Wednesday to palm Sunday. It is forty (40) days fasting.

VII. Wearing of white clothe, women covering of hair and use of olive oil:

According to Bishop Isaac Wontumi and Pastor Edward Ayetey, wearing of white clothe, women covering of hair and use of olive oil are culture of the church. They said that, the reason why the church uses olive oil is that, when someone is seriously sick the church use this to heal the person. They said, in the scripture, James Chapter 5:13-15 says "if anyone of us is sick we call the elders of the church to pray for him anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord the prayer of faith will make the sick person well".

B. MINISTERS IN THE CHURCH

I) Preaching and Teaching:

In the church, the pastors are responsible to preach and to teach the word of God very well in order to let the congregation mature in Christ. The pastors in the church make sure that they teach the Bible at anytime the church meet together so that the church will not go wayward.

II) Caring and Counselling:

Pastors, deacons and deaconesses are seen as shepherds or stewards in the church. With this, it is the responsibility of a leader to show all kinds of caring, love in the church. The pastor needs to be visiting the congregation always in order to keep them united in Christ. The pastor too counsels people who are having marital problems, those who are going to marry and those who are having problems in their lives.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WORSHIP LIFE OF THE CHURCH

1. Worshipping days and time:

The church worships three times in a week. That is Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Wednesday from seven to nine in the evening the church practices healing and prays for pregnant women. But on Fridays the church organizes exhortation and faith clinic. That is, the church preaches and teaches the word of God to the congregation.

2. Sundays mode of worship:

a. Bible Teaching:

Every Sunday morning from nine to ten the church is ready for Bible studies. This studies have been designed in two; the children class and the adult class. The Children Bible Studies are taken by the youth leader in the church or any one who is elected by the church. The adult one is done by the pastor or the Sunday school teacher.

b. Call to Worship:

Before the Sunday service begins, the leader will allow the church to sing worship songs to help prepare the members for worship. After that, the leader will call to worship by ringing a bell seven times and read Psalm 51 for prayers. The reason why the leader prays this prayer is to let God forgive our sins

c. Adoration prayer, Hymn and Praise:

The whole congregation will sing adoration song to adore Christ, praise Him, lift up His name. They can sing hymn from the Melchizedek church hymn book or sing any worship song. After that, the pastor will pray or will elect some one to pray to sum up the adoration.

d. Hymn or Praise:

Here the whole church will sing any hymn from the hymn book or they will sing praises.

e. Thanksgiving prayer:

After singing the hymn, the whole congregation will thank God for what He has done for them in their lives.

f. Hymn or Praise:

The whole congregation will once again sing a hymn to praise God.

g. Victory prayer:

The church will pray a prayer of victory for all people. For instance, the church will pray for children, pregnant women, sick people, travellers, workers, widows, orphans that God should provide all their needs, protect them and heal those who are sick.

h. Hymn or Praise:

Once again, the church will sing a hymn or praise to glorify our almighty Father (God).

i. 1st Bible reading:

Bible reading is usually done by the secretary and other elected people in the church. In the first Bible reading, we read English language, Twi, Ga and Ewe.

j. Hymn or Praise:

After reading the first Bible lesson the whole congregation once again sing a hymn to glorify God.

k. 2nd Bible reading:

Again, this reading is also taken by the secretary and elected members. We also read English language, Twi, Ga and Ewes.

l. The Apostles Creed:

The church strongly believe and recite the apostle creed in order to confirm their faith in Christ Jesus.

m. Praises:

During this time, the church will now give three shouts by singing any song, beating the drums, clapping of hands and those who will dance will dance.

n. Sermon:

Usually the sermon is delivered by the pastor and any elected one in the church.

o. Announcement:

The announcement is given by the secretary to the church.

p. Thanksgiving:

This is where people will come and testify to what the Lord has done for them.

q. Tithes and Welfare:

This is the time that, the congregation will bring all their tithes in to the house of the Lord and welfare contributions they are proposing to pay.

r. Collection or Offertory:

The congregation now comes before God with an offertory (money) with singing.

s. Closing prayer:

This is done by the pastor or he can appoint anyone in the church to pray and commit the whole church into the hand of the Lord.

t. Benediction:

The benediction is given by the pastor, in his absence the secretary or an elder will do it.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

I) Godhead:

I have been told by my pastor (Edward Ayetey Affum) at Wassa Atobiase that the church of Melchizedek believes that, there is God, but only one true and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 43:10-11, 44:8, Luke 3:22. He told me that, God is eternally existent in the distinct persons or forms. (The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) and these are one God. But not God in different personalities or forms. He said, the church believes that, the Godhead is co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent. Which means, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one or the same, having eternal life and are always existent. He said, God never changes, He is there yesterday, today and tomorrow or forever (Hebrew 13:8)

Once again, he said, the church believes that, eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who is "God" created the heaven and earth and all that is in them and governs all by His providence. He also said that, the church believes that, God is unchangeable. Meaning God does not change. He is infinitely perfect and intimately with all ways.

II) Jesus Christ:

The pastor (Edward) once again told me that, the church believes in Jesus Christ as the second person of Godhead. He is the eternal Son of God. He said, the church teaches that Jesus Christ while true man is also true God. He said, the

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church teaches that, Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to the world to atone for the sins of mankind in order that human beings or mankind could be saved through Him. (Matthew 16:16).

Also, he said, the church believes that God manifests in the flesh, His very God who came in human's flesh, co-existence and eternal with the Father (God) that He (Jesus) is the object of our worship and the subject of our praise.

Once more, I have been told by the pastor that, the church believes in Christ virgin birth, His sinless Human's life, His divine miracle which He (Christ) the mighty one has performed. The church also believes that, Christ is the mighty healer and wonderful performer. The church also believes in the work of Christ on the cross (the death of Christ), His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven setting at the right hand side of God, His person future return to the earth in power and glory to people who have faith or putting their trust in Christ Jesus, Matthew 1:23, 1:35, I Peter 2:2, Hebrew 4:14-15, John 2:11.

III) The Holy Spirit:

This is one of doctrines of believers in the Church of Melchizedek. The church believes that, the Holy Spirit is God. Which means that, the church believes in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit and also as the third person of Godhead who is continually performing an important work on earth. He said that, the church believes and accepts that it is the Holy Spirit who always convicts us of guilt and sin, of unrighteousness, judgment and also drawing sinners from their sins to the Lord (saviour).

In the same way, the church also believes that, the Holy Spirit guides, teaches, protects, sustains and remembers us in all things. The church also believes that, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believers in Christ, enabling them to live a holy life for Christ, or life that pleases God. He also help us to witness Christ to people, especially those who have not known God and assists us also to work for God as well (1 Thess. 5:23, 1 Peter 1:2, Galatians 5:16). As Roman 12:1 says "therefore I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship" N.I.V Study Bible, page 1726, Zondervan Publishing House.

IV) Man and the Fall:

According to the pastor at Wassa Atobiase (Edward Ayetey) and my Bishop Isaac Wontumi, the church believes that, man was created in the image of God and likeness. And man was therefore holy and righteous in the beginning but because of voluntary disobedience or transgression which mankind has done, he fell from his Godly purity and innocence into sin and iniquity. And because of this, all mankind has fallen (Genesis 1:27, 3:1-14, Romans 5:12).

V) Salvation:

The word salvation means being saved from danger, lose or harm. According to my pastor and Bishop Isaac Wontumi, the church believes that, the salvation of sinners is only through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, the church believes that, we have no righteousness or goodness of our own. But the

goodness or righteousness comes from divine favour from our Lord Jesus Christ. They also told me that, the church believes that, we have been saved or sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 6:47, Ephesians 2:8, 13).

VI) Bible:

According to Pastor Edward and our Bishop, the church believes that, the Holy Bible is a fully uniquely inspired word of God. They said that, the church believes that, the Holy Scripture is true and holy. Which means that the Holy Bible or word of God is infallible in a sense because the word of God is holy, true and inspired. The Holy Scripture is trust worthy, sufficient and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, John 20:31, Matthew 24:35 and Psalm 119:11).

VII) Life after death and judgment:

According to Pastor and Bishop, the church believes that, when one dies, he or she is still alive or there is life after death. They have said that, in I Thessalonians 4:14, the Bible says that "Jesus dies and rose again and so we (the church) believes that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him" N.I.V. Study Bible, page 1826, Zondervan Publishing House.

Once again, they said that, the church believes that, the dead both small and great, rich or poor shall be raised up (resurrected) and with the living before the judgment seat of God. And after that, awful separation will take place and the

wicked (lost) shall be judged to eternal fire or condemnation, and the righteous ones shall be saved to life eternal (2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

VIII) Marriage and Divorce

The church believes that, it is God who instituted marriage and gave permission or right to human beings to marry. According to Pastor Edward, the church believes that, marriage is good that is why God said that, it is not good for a man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). And in Genesis 2:24, God once again said that, "for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife". N.I.V Study Bible Page 9, Zondervan Publishing House.

So the pastor said that, the church permits one wife, one husband (monogamy), but not more than one. He said that, if people are going to marry, they must first see their counselors in the church for advice and other help.

On the hand, he said, in case some one is having two wives before coming to the church, the church will not disown him or will not let him leave one of his wives, but the church will let him marry them. With this, the pastor will counsel the man to love his wives and be faithful to them in order to bring peace and harmony in the house, and to the church as well.

In the same way, according to the pastor, the church allows divorce when a partner commits adultery. Apart from adultery, one cannot divorce his wife (Matthew 19:9).

He said, if any one divorces his wife, apart from adultery or for no reason, the ministers would first call the person and talk to him. If still the man is not willing

to marry the wife again, he will be suspended for some time, while he will be coming to the church. For example, he will not read the Bible in the church, play drums etc.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

EVANGELISM

According to the Pastor Edward Ayetey, the main aim or purpose for which he established or opened the church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase was to win souls for Christ Jesus. He said, the church believes that, seeing that, the end of all things was at hand, then the redeemed children of the Lord needed to arise and spread forth the gospel message to the ends of the earth. So that, those who are in the darkness should come out from the dark to the light of God. He said the church have made it or planned that, every member in the church needs to witness to Christ (Mark 16:15-16).

Once again, when the church of Melchizedek was established at Wassa Atobiase, the pastor said, they wanted the church to grow both quantitatively and qualitatively. That is, they wanted the church to grow in number, having many branches at other places. Also, they wanted the church to grow spiritually by knowing the word of God very well, living a life that pleases God.

With this, the church have planned for evangelization programs. First, the church went to a certain village called Baase for crusade (three days crusade). At that place, he said, through the power of the Holy Spirit the church had some people to join the church.

Secondly, the pastor said, the church also went up to a village called "Beenoyie" for evangelism. Unfortunately, he said, the church got only one person to join the church.

Thirdly, the pastor also said, the church went to another village called Anto for three days crusade or evangelism. There too, some people accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour and Lord. Upon all these evangelism, the pastor said, what they normally preached was about sin, judgment and salvation in the Bible. He said that, the Bible was their authority for doing that.

Lastly, the pastor said that, when some people were sick in their houses, the church used to go there and prayed for them. Even though some of them were not members to the church. With this, people came and joined the church and the number of the church has increased. So to conclude, these were the ways the church passed to win souls in the church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHURCH FINANCE

According to the pastor (Edward Ayetey Affum), the only approved financial plan by the church of Melchizedek for the support of God's work is by tithes, offerings and contributions for welfare. According to the pastor, the church has not made tithes an obligation for every member to pay. The church however encourages the members to pay as the Scripture says that whenever believers in Christ work, they need to divide their crops and money into ten parts and bring one part to the house of the Lord (Deuteronomy 14:22-27).

In the church, tithes are not sent into the national coffers but every branch keeps the tithes and that one is used to support the pastor in his work (God's work), in order for God's work to go on. The reason is that, in the Old Testament, tithes are given to the levites as reward for their participation in the service of God's work (Numbers 18:25-30).

Also, according to the pastor, the church has not made it a policy or a law that if anyone does not pay his or her tithes and he or she dies, the church will not bury the person. The church has the right to bury that person, while he or she is still a member of the church.

~~Again~~, the pastor goes on to say that, the church supports or encourages free-will ~~offering~~. Occasional fund raising activities are organized. As a result, an offering box is placed before the pulpit or in the center of the chapel where offerings are voluntarily put in. These monies are used to put up chapel for worship.

Welfare in the church (funds), contributions are used to care for those who are sick and cannot work at all. They are also used to lend to those who need some money to establish their business. The pastor said that, the reason why the church is doing all these things is to let love be among the members in the church. These are therefore the plans or ways the church pass to get money. All these monies are used to help Gods work, development of the church, to help those who are sick, weak, having any problem and lending to those who want to establish business in the church as well.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATION

From my study of the church, I have come to the conclusion that, the church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase is planted and centred on Jesus Christ. The church as the body of Christ started well with love among the elders and the members. Formerly there was proper discipline and understanding among the elders and the members. As a result the church was richly blessed. Also, concerning the doctrines in the church everything the church does is in line or march with the word of God. This proves to me that practices and doctrines are all biblical. But one thing I have noticed concerning Pastor Edward, is that, because he is not well educated and has not had a theological background, he emphasizes more on healing and taking care of pregnant women. With this, teaching the congregation the word of God is not there and that has led to the loss of many members. The result is that whenever a person is recovered from his or her health problem then he or she leaves the church to join another church. So I am saying teaching of the word of God must be the first important thing to Pastor Edward and to the church, so that the church will know the word of God very well .

Again, I have also noticed that, whenever Pastor Edward is preaching, he could not tell the background of the book, the occasion and purpose of the book in the Bible, so that he can interpret the passage very well to the congregation. With all these things, I think he needs to be trained and have theological bases for what he preaches. Also, to me the church needs to train young men and women so that they can acquire knowledge and wisdom in order to assist the church to grow both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Lastly, I have observed that, the tithes are not given to widows and the poor as the scripture says. To me, I think the church should start to give part of the money to these people as it has been given to pastors for their support to God's work. So that God's blessing should be in the church in abundance (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

CONCLUSION

I commend Pastor Edward Ayetey Affum and his elders who supported him to open a branch of the church of Melchizedek at Wassa Atobiase (Western Region, a church which is one of the A.I.C Churches in Ghana. As I have been in the church for so many years, I have found that, the church is not growing as it should. For a church to be dynamic, training of pastors and evangelism must be the first goal. I think, therefore that the church needs to train an evangelist so that he can go out and bring those who are in the darkness to the light. Also, the church needs to teach the congregation about evangelism, especially personal evangelism at which they can go from house to house, meet the people personally in order to know their mind and problem, which need to be solved. I think this style of evangelism can be easy and can change people early to Christ Jesus. If this thing has been taken into consideration, then it will promote the growth of the church (Matthew 28:18-20). So to conclude my research on the church of Melchizedek, I will say this is one of the principles which will help the church to grow.